

**CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ENCOURAGING A BALANCED  
APPROACH TO THE RELEASE OF WATER FROM FLAMING  
GORGE**

2021 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

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**LONG TITLE**

**General Description:**

This concurrent resolution expresses support and recognition of the Green River Stakeholders and the need to reduce the adverse effects of current Flaming Gorge Dam operations to the local communities, recreational businesses, ranchers, farmers, landowners, and individuals who work and live within the river corridor.

**Highlighted Provisions:**

This resolution:

- describes the Green River Stakeholders and their concerns associated with the management of the Flaming Gorge Dam;
- describes an alternative method of managing the Flaming Gorge Dam;
- describes the need for investigations and cooperative discussions related to management of the Flaming Gorge Dam; and
- supports the creation of a new management plan.

**Special Clauses:**

None

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*Be it resolved by the Legislature of the state of Utah, the Governor concurring therein:*

WHEREAS, the "Green River Stakeholders" is a group of local communities, recreational businesses, ranchers, farmers, landowners, and individuals who work and live within the river corridor associated with the Flaming Gorge Dam and who are adversely affected by the current methods employed by the Western Area Power Administration, the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program, and ultimately the Bureau of Reclamation because of releases of water from the Flaming Gorge Dam;

WHEREAS, the Green River Stakeholders, wishing to reduce the physical and

economic impacts of current river flow management, propose an alternative method of protecting the endangered fish species, while complying with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, thus preserving the balance that has been desired in the Upper Colorado River Basin water rights discussions;

WHEREAS, the Green River Stakeholders, from the dam to the confluence of the Colorado River, propose partnerships with private landowners that provide for private landowner benefits, such as compensation or shore recovery, and that also provide for recovery of endangered fish in the river so that the fish would no longer be listed as endangered;

WHEREAS, the benefits of these partnerships with private landowners can be achieved with more predictable flushes of the Green River each year, allowing the local stakeholders to support and enhance the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program;

WHEREAS, the economic impact to the communities along the entire length of the Green River is affected by the daily operations of the Flaming Gorge Dam dictated by the Bureau of Reclamation as guided by the 2006 "Record of Decision";

WHEREAS, current flow requirements have resulted in what may be unintended but are real consequences of the current management plan such as erosion of banks, issues with sediment, the sub-saturation of private land due to high water levels, and floods over banks of the Green River whenever highwater flows occur;

WHEREAS, it is essential that the government and private stakeholders participate in an investigation of how to mitigate the harms of the highwater releases to address the environment, recreation, and economic impacts related to these releases;

WHEREAS, private landowners may demonstrate loss of private property as erosion creates a dynamic stream bed along the river corridor, which has impacts such as recreation by the public on the sandbanks created by the erosion and on the adjacent private land and the loss of agricultural viability of the land;

WHEREAS, the amount of water that is bypassed through the dam system without going through turbines constitutes missed opportunities for producing low cost and carbon free power; and

WHEREAS, a new management plan for the Flaming Gorge Dam should be developed in the near future and would benefit from input from a diverse group of stakeholders, including local communities, recreational businesses, ranchers, farmers, and individuals who work and

63 live within the river corridor associated with the Flaming Gorge Dam:

64           NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah, the  
65 Governor concurring therein, supports the creation of a new management plan that allows  
66 stakeholders to participate in the development and implementation of the plan and provides a  
67 balanced approach to the release of water from the Flaming Gorge Dam.

68           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of the resolution be sent to the  
69 Commissioner for the Bureau of Reclamation, the director of the Upper Colorado River  
70 Endangered Fish Recovery Program, the administrator and CEO of the Western Area Power  
71 Administration, and the executive director of the Department of Natural Resources.